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ABSTRACT

In 1988 Norway House Indian Band in Manitoba, Canada, will assume control of education for its young people, a move which is supported by 80% of its adult members. With an immediate enrollment of 800 students and predicted growth in enrollments, the Band has the potential to develop a high quality educational program at reasonable cost. The Band will inherit a system of education marked by modern, well-maintained facilities and an efficient system of student transportation but characterized by achievement difficulties and a lack of cooperation among parents, students, and teachers. Developing a sense of educational partnership is absolutely essential and must be a top priority. The following items are scheduled to receive immediate attention from the Band's leadership: (1) development of ways to improve home and school relationships as well as to improve the community image of the high school; (2) development of a strong counseling department; (3) review of the high school program, including an examination of the nature of programs for mature students and returning high school drop-outs; (4) examination of vocational and industrial education; (5) assessment of provisions for special and remedial education; and (6) review of student promotion policies. (JHZ)

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Education in Norway House

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December 1987

Norway House Education Authority
Norway House, Manitoba

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Chief Allan Ross
Norway House Band Council
Norway House, Manitoba
R0B 1B0

Dear Chief Ross:

Please accept this document as the report which you and the Education Authority requested.

The education review process was to consist of four phases:

- general data collection and evaluation
- detailed examination of identified areas of concern
- informational and consultative meetings with band members
- policy development and implementation planning.

This report concludes the fiurst two phases and will provide a basis for discussion during phase three which is to begin in January 1988.

Since education is a community concern, this report was written with students, parents, community leaders and administrators in mind. It is a condensation of our more detailed interim report (phase one) and six policy reports (phase two). Interested persons may obtain these reports from the Norway House Education Authority.

Several people have been instrumental in the review process to date: Maggie Balfour, Brian Cromartie, the community interviewers, Sylvan Chaddee, and Bill Thomas have all been very helpful. We thank them for their efforts.

If everyone contributes, Norway House has the potential to develop a high quality system of education.. We believe that our recommendations provide the basis for policies and programs that will allow Band Control of education to be highly successful.

Respectfully submitted

D. Bruce Sealey

J. Anthony Riffel

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Part One:
The Present Educational System

The educational system in Norway House is not successful. Levels of achievement that are lower than they should be, drop-out rates are high and students are not interested in their own education. There is a crisis of confidence in the current educational system. The majority of high school students in the community feel that the total program is of poor quality. Two thirds of the adults in the community give the system ratings of fair, poor and very poor, and that one-third of the adults in the community believe that the system is worse than it was five years ago.

While the tendency to find someone to blame for these problems is natural, and the high school is the obvious candidate because of its visibility, blaming gets in the way of solving the problems that everyone agrees exist. Education is not limited to the school or the teachers: it is begun in the home, continued in the school and reinforced by the community. A "successful" school is nurtured by "successful" families and communities. Successful students often have good teachers, but they are always serious about their own growth and development. Educational success is always the result of a partnership among parents, students, community members and educators.

Parents, students and teachers are interdependent. Educational problems are community, family and student problems, not just problems for teachers, counselors and administrators. To create a successful educational system, each must listen, each must give as well as take, and each must accept responsibility for his or her own actions as well as holding other people accountable for theirs.

1. Enrolment

In June, 1987, there were 929 students enrolled in the three schools in Norway House. Table One provides details, showing total enrolments in the community and the distribution of treaty and non-treaty students.

The information makes it clear that Norway House has enough students to develop a viable system of education locally. An enrolment of nearly 800 students would make Norway House as large as a few rural divisions in Manitoba, as well as larger than many of the school districts in the province.

We have no information on which to base enrolment projections for the schools over the next five to ten years. The birth rate in Norway House does not seem to have dropped as far as in other communities in the province. If the Band is successful in education, drop-out rates will decrease and larger numbers of adults may return to school; if these occur, high school enrolments could increase, potentially to about twice their current numbers. Also unknown are the effects of Bill C-31. If large numbers of Indian women and their children are returned to

Band membership or the general list, this will increase the number of treaty students who will attend the Band schools and, perhaps, reduce the numbers to be served by Frontier School Division.

We can only guess what enrolments might be taking all of these factors into account. It seems reasonable to expect a minimum enrolment of 800 students for each of the next five years, with every possibility that enrolments will increase to about 1,000 in that period.

Table One

TOTAL SCHOOL ENROLMENT
NORWAY HOUSE, JUNE 1987

	Community	Treaty Students	Non-Treaty Students
Nursery	70	52	18
Kindergarten	74	56	18
Grade 1	80	68	12
2	80	67	13
3	78	65	13
4	69	57	12
5	94	82	12
6	70	56	14
7	94	82	12
8	71	60	11
9	62	50	12
10	33	27	6
11	27	18	9
12	27	19	8
Total	929	759	170

2. Attendance

Table Two shows the average annual attendance in the three schools of Norway House since the 1983-84 school year. The figures in the elementary schools are encouraging, although we believe that people should not be satisfied with levels of attendance below ninety per cent. The picture is different at the high school, and must be regarded as a matter of serious concern.

Table Two

Attendance in Norway House
1983-84 to 1986-87

	Jack River	Rossville	Norway House High School
1983-84	83	90	76
1984-85	86	86	72
1986-86	85	83	76
1986-87	86	88	73

3. Student Achievement

Many stories begin , "We have some good news and some bad news." So it is with student achievement in the schools of Norway House. Student achievement in Norway House is not as poor as it is often rumored to be; nor is it good enough. At the same time, the record of the high school, indeed the whole system, is not a happy one. Drop out rates are too high; the number of students completing high school is too low; the numbers of students finding employment or continuing to post-secondary education after graduation are much lower than they should be.

Age-Grade Placement in the Elementary Schools

One measure of student achievement is an "age-grade placement" table. Such a table enables people to determine whether students are in the correct grade for their age (for example in Grade One at age 6), and whether student progress through the educational system is comparable to other schools.

Tables Three and Four provide age-grade placement information for Rossville and Jack River Schools. On the surface, the picture is a good one. Nearly all students are at the appropriate grade for their age--indeed the number who have been held back is well below the provincial average of about seven per cent.

Beneath the surface, the picture is probably different. Parents who were interviewed frequently commented on students being passed from one grade to the

next, even when the students did not know what was expected. In our survey of staff in June, some teachers expressed concern about the number of social passes. Surveys of the teachers in Rossville and Jack River Schools in October indicated that about 30% of the students are not prepared for success in their grades. Provincial assessment test rsults, which we refer to next, are not encouraging. And, in our experience, high school results which are as disturbing as those at the Norway House High School can at least in part be attributed to inadequate preparation at earlier levels.

Table Three

AGE-GRADE PLACEMENT, ROSSVILLE SCHOOL
SEPTEMBER 1986

	Grade							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Age								
6	37							
7	1	31						
8		5	26	1				
9			8	23				
10				3	40			
11				2	4	21		
12					2	6	27	
13						3	10	15
14						1	2	11
15								2
16							1	

Table Four

AGE-GRADE PLACEMENT, JACK RIVER SCHOOL
SEPTEMBER 1986

	Grade							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Age								
6	40							
7	4	36	1					
8		8	34	1				
9			7	32				
10			2	7	27	1		
11				2	20	18	1	
12					2	17	32	2
13						3	18	17
14							2	19
15								5
16								1

Provincial Test Results

Manitoba Education periodically administers tests to a sample of students in the province to assess student achievement and the degree to which the curriculum objectives established for the province are being accomplished. Frontier School Division has participated in this program, and some recent results for two of the tests are are summarized in Tables Five and Six. To reduce the length of this report, we have decided to include only Grade Six test results here; similar results were obtained in Grades Three and Nine, and are available on request.

We have already noted our view that provincial assessment test results for the schools in Norway House are disappointing. Although it must be noted that there are exceptions, the general pattern is that test scores in Frontier School Division are below the average for the province, and that students in Norway House sometimes score at levels below the average for Frontier School Division.

Table Five

Grade Six Reading Assessment
1987

Skill Area	Provincial Average	Divisional Average	Jack River	Rossville
Vocabulary	55.5	39.89	40.76	44.78
Comprehension	75.2	47.81	60.05	52.92
Interpretation	53.5	44.47	42.08	35.77
Criticism	56.3	41.83	32.94	17.00
Study Skills	58.0	49.22	56.54	59.44
Cloze Test	55.1	44.47	47.30	47.45

Table Six

Raw Scores, Grade Six Mathematics Assessment

Provincial Average 1981	Divisional Average 1983-84	Jack River 1985-86	Rossville 1985-86
72	48	53	41

Student Achievement in the High School

Norway House High School (Grades Ten to Twelve) offers a range of courses, It operates on a semester system, which means that the year is divided into two terms. Some courses are available within only one semester while others are offered on a daily basis throughout the whole year. The administration and most of the staff are dedicated to improving academic achievement. They encourage drop-outs to return to school on a full-time basis and they accept mature students who want to upgrade their skills or improve their standings by taking one or more subjects.

At least two things about the high school program need to be noted. One, there is an emphasis on general courses--a compromise between the Band's desire for more attention to academically rigorous courses and the feeling of some teachers that many students are not adequately prepared or motivated to work at a higher level. Two, occupational courses are limited; students fear that occupational courses will close out their options, even when job skill training is a priority in the community.

During our preparation for this evaluation, and in the interviews with adult members of the Band, the claim was often made that Norway House High School has not had a graduate in recent years. Like other rumors, this one is untrue and has destructive effects. Table Seven provides information on the number of high school graduates in recent years.

Table Seven

NUMBER OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES
NORWAY HOUSE 1976-1987

Year	Number
1976	8
1977	12
1978	12
1979	5
1980	12
1981	9
1982	14
1983	14
1984	26
1985	22
1986	20
1987	13

In the first term of 1986-87, 26 semestered courses were offered. The total enrolment was 337, with an average course enrolment of about 13 students. By the

end of the semester only 179 students were enrolled and the average class size was about 7 students. Of the 179 students who remained in the courses, their performance was as follows: 9% achieved a Grade of A; 16%, B; 33%, C; 29%, D; and 11%, F. This disturbing picture of low grades and high drop out rates (31% in 1986-87) is reinforced in Table Eight.

Table Eight

HIGH SCHOOL WITHDRAWALS,
NORWAY HOUSE, 1986-1987

Grade	Enrolment in September	Enrolment in June	Number Withdrawing
9	76	62	14
10	62	33	29
11	41	27	14
12	37	27	12
Totals	216	149	67

What explains the high drop out rates and the poor levels of achievement? Certainly, the very open admisssions policy of the High School needs to be remembered. Mature students and drop-outs who have returned to high school are high-risk students; American research has shown that only a fraction of the drop-outs who return to school are successful. Norway House High School statistics provided by the principal bear this out; over eighty per cent of the mature students enrolled in Grade Twelve dropped out, compared to five per cent among the regular Grade Twelve students.

It is simplistic to believe that all of the achievement problems in the high school started there. Students have years in school prior to entering Grade Ten. In some subjects, they are probably experiencing the effects of difficulties accumulated over the years. Some academic problems, such as low reading ability, may have begun as early as Grade One, with children experiencing less than a year's growth but being promoted anyway; in extreme cases the cumulative result could be some students entering Grade Nine or Ten without being able to read the textbooks.

Families and communities may also come into play. Parents without a high school education themselves will find it impossible to assist their children with school work at home. Parents unfortunate to be permanently on welfare may have lost the work ethic and cannot pass it on to their children. The community might send mixed messages to students; negative remarks about the high school contradict other statements about the value of a high school education.

It is also necessary to ask whether instruction is interesting or counseling is helpful. Adult members of the community agree. The high school counselors, teachers and administrators must study the extent to which their attitudes and actions have contributed to problems of achievement and motivation.

4. Special Education

In all communities there are children with special educational needs--students whose mild, moderate or severe disabilities make necessary the provision of special programs and support services. Table Nine provides information on the number of children with special needs in Norway House.

Table Nine shows that about eight per cent of the students in Norway House have special needs, a percentage that is much higher than in the province as a whole. It also implies that Frontier School Division has been doing especially well in this area--special needs funding is negotiated, and the Division has vigorously and successfully pursued funding for the special students of the community.

Table Nine

Funded Special Needs Students, Norway House
September 1986

	Mildly Disabled	Moderately Disabled	Severely Disabled
Jack River	20	1	0
Rossville	21	0	3
High School	32	1	0

Special funding from the province has enabled the Division to employ in Norway House a special services coordinator, a half-time school psychologist, a half-time speech clinician and a consultant for the education of autistic children. All of the students have the services of a teacher assistant: those with mild disabilities have the support of an assistant for an hour or more a day, usually during language arts and mathematics instruction. Those who are severely disabled have an assistant full-time and could not attend school without the help of this person.

5. Adult Perceptions of Education In Norway House

During July and August, 1987, a survey was undertaken of adult members of the Norway House Indian Band. Nearly all households on the Reserve were contacted

and interviews were conducted eventually with 284 persons; the same 284 people completed a questionnaire. Adults in Norway house are like adults everywhere--they want an educational system which will "do it all," which offers a wide range of courses and programs catering to a wide variety of student interests and community aspirations. Adults are pleased with some aspects of education in the community--especially with the facilities, student transportation and the growing number of native teachers employed by Frontier School Division. Many feel that, while the system is better than it was five years ago, it is still not good enough, especially insofar as student achievement and behavior are concerned.

Band Control

Eighty per cent of the adult members of the Band surveyed in July and August 1987 want education in Norway House to be controlled locally.

Table Ten

ADULT PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL CONTROL OF EDUCATION IN NORWAY HOUSE
JUNE 1987

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Local control of education is important.	76	154	36	21	5
When local control comes, the people should elect their own school board.	90	116	23	45	1
When local control comes, the school board should be appointed by Chief and Council.	11	58	22	133	58

Adult Aspirations

The judgements people make about an educational system are related to their objectives for education. A highly regarded system of education is one that does a good job of things that people value most. A system that is less highly thought of is one that does a poor job of most things, or a good job only of less important things.

To get an indication of what the adults hope to achieve through the educational system, we prepared a list of six educational goal statements, each representing a different area of emphasis for education. During the interview people were asked to identify the two which were the most important to them and well as the two which were least important.

The results are shown in Table Eleven. The emphasis on job skills and preparation for post-secondary education is strong. The division of opinion on the importance of native language and culture in the schools will need to be handled carefully; our experience suggests that this can be a controversial issue in some communities and that, in spite of the controversy, programs which reflect native language and culture are highly desirable.

Table Eleven

GOALS FOR EDUCATION IN NORWAY HOUSE:
PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE MOST AND LEAST IMPORTANT GOALS

Goals	Times Mentioned As Most Important	Times Mentioned As Least Important
Teaching the skills students need to get a job	113	21
Teaching students to think for themselves	47	58
Teaching students to share and cooperate with others	37	49
Teaching students about their culture	46	63
Teaching students to read, write and do mathematics	77	23
Preparing students to go to college or university	93	29
All goals are equally important	73	

Adult Perceptions of Goal Achievement

We also used the procedure just described to determine which goals adults felt the school system is doing the best job of achieving. The results are shown in Table Twelve.

The frequently poor fit between this table and the one just considered may help to explain much of the dissatisfaction with education in the community. Adult aspirations emphasize job skills and preparation for post-secondary education, but these are most often mentioned by adults as the goals at which the system does the worst job.

Table Twelve

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL GOALS IN NORWAY HOUSE:
PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE BEST AND WORST JOBS OF THE SYSTEM

Goals	Times Mentioned As Doing The Best Job	Times Mentioned As Doing The Worst Job
Teaching the skills students need to get a job	45	41
Teaching students to think for themselves	31	51
Teaching students to share and cooperate with others	61	49
Teaching students about their culture	34	51
Teaching students to read, write and do mathematics	103	14
Preparing students to go to college or university	26	75
All goals	3	7

Grading the System

Giving students a letter or percentage grade for their work in school is a normal part of education. We felt it appropriate to ask parents and other adults to grade the system.

The results in Table Thirteen are striking because they show a wide range of opinion, and because the majority of people who responded to the question do not rate the system highly. These data stand in sharp contrast to provincial and national opinion polls which show that eighty per cent of Manitobans and Canadians give their schools a grade of "B" or better.

Table Thirteen

GRADING THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM:
THE OPINIONS OF ADULTS IN NORWAY HOUSE

Grade	Number	Percent
A	11	4
B	72	25
C	75	26
D	53	19
F	9	3
No Comment	64	23

Is the System Improving?

Education in Norway House has gone through several transitions, each being introduced with the promise that education would improve as a result. We asked people whether they felt the system has become better or worse in recent years, and to explain their response.

Table Fourteen shows that the majority of those who expressed an opinion felt that the system has improved, although a large minority feels that the situation has worsened. Table Fourteen does not include other data which show that those who felt the system had improved cited better facilities and transportation as the reasons for their answer and that those who felt it had worsened cited student achievement and behavior as their reasons.

It is conceivable, even likely, that there is a majority view that Frontier School Division has done much to improve the resources available, but little if anything to improve the overall level of educational achievement in the community.

Finally the contrast between the Norway House data and provincial and national opinion polls is again worth noting. More than eighty per cent of all Manitobans and Canadians feel that education has improved in recent years.

Table Fourteen

CHANGE IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM:
THE OPINIONS OF ADULTS IN NORWAY HOUSE

Condition	Number	Percent
Better than 5 years ago	124	44
The same as it was	12	4
Worse than 5 years ago	71	25
No Comment	77	27

General Opinions About Education and the System

The final part of our survey of adult members of the Norway House Indian Band consisted of a questionnaire. The results in Table Fifteen show, on balance, positive attitudes toward certain aspects of the schools and the educational system in the community, and indicate that there is a pool of good will on which to build higher levels of success.

The areas in which the balance of opinion is negative are shown in Table Sixteen. These are areas in which the Education Authority and the school must seek improvement. Parents do not feel adequately informed about the policies of the school. They are concerned about discipline. They do not believe that the total program of the schools is of high quality.

Table Fifteen

ADULT PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATION IN NORWAY HOUSE
JUNE 1987

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I get enough information about the progress of my child.	11	161	48	57	7
The schools are doing a good job teaching students to read, write and do mathematics.	19	168	36	52	9
The schools help children to get along with other people.	8	132	59	73	12

The number of courses offered in the schools is adequate.	2	102	65	65	12
Counseling and special education services in the schools are adequate.	2	100	80	71	28
The schools are clean and well-maintained.	28	208	32	10	6
My child looks forward to going to school each day.	18	168	36	37	21
It is easy to make appointments to see teachers or the principal.	9	147	23	34	5
Children receive all the help they need in class.	12	112	57	92	11
School rules are reasonable.	2	142	103	27	0
The morale of students in school is good.	3	135	65	62	14
School bus services meet student needs.	20	175	23	47	19
Proper emphasis is placed on homework in the schools.	6	115	52	84	27
The teachers place enough emphasis on academic achievement in the schools.	4	108	79	74	19
Our teachers and administrators are highly competent.	2	90	123	52	10

Table Sixteen

ADULT PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATION IN NORWAY HOUSE
JUNE 1987

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Parents are informed about the policies of the schools.	4	63	48	132	37
The programs of the schools are good for students who want to go to university or college.	8	79	84	82	28
Discipline in the schools is about right.	2	99	55	101	23
The total program at the schools are of high quality.	0	80	95	90	19

6. Student Views

In the Spring of 1987, the Frontier School Division conducted an evaluation of education in the Norway house High School, the results of which have been sent to the Band. Included in the Division's evaluation was a survey of high school students. The survey was a good one, and there is no reason to suspect that the results were biased. With the Division's permission we summarize the results of that survey here. Those who wish more information should consult the Division's original report.

It is not necesssary at this stage to go through the results of that survey in great detail. Taken as a whole, these results reinforce what has already been written and add the students' voices to those of the adults in the community. To be sure, the high school has certain strengths, but the weaknesses appear decisive. The majority do not feel that the total educational program at the high school is of high quality. Counseling is found wanting. Students are concerned about vocational courses. There may be too much emphasis on sports, a view shared by many parents. Opinion is divided on the student council, the administration , and teachers. The community as a whole may not be supportive enough, and students may not put enough energy into their own success.

Table Seventeen

STUDENT OPINION SURVEY, NORWAY HOUSE HIGH SCHOOL
MAY 1987

	Agree	Disagree
OVERALL ASSESSMENT		
Our high school is doing a good job in teaching us the basic skills	91	29
The programs and curricula in our high school are adequate for students planning to continue their education beyong high school graduation.	81	40
The total educational program at NHHS is of high quality.	56	66
Grade 12 graduates have a better opportunity to get jobs in Norway House than those with less than a grade 12.	74	49
Most students feel good about coming to school.	47	74
Our high school is doing a good job of preparing us for a rapidly changing society.	56	67
Our high school and its teachers help us to understand and get along with other people.	71	54
Our high school is doing a good job of giving us the opportunity to reach our full potential.	47	78
NHHS does a good job in preparing us for post-secondary education.	57	68
NHHS does a good job in preparing us for responsible community membership.	54	70
The discipline policy in our school is appropriate for teenagers in Norway House.	60	61
COUNSELING		
I am familiar with the types of courses offered in our high school.	92	31
The counseling program helps me with my course selections and planning out my program.	52	71
The counseling program provides assistance and encouragement when I have attendance problems.	50	71

The counseling program helps me when I have personal problems.	32	90
The teacher advisor system is a good system for communicating with students, parents and teachers.	99	23
The teacher advisor system helps teachers be more understanding and supportive towards students.	81	42
I am satisfied with the assistance given to students in the selection of courses.	64	58
My teacher advisor listens carefully to the problems that I express to him/her.	69	53
My teacher advisor is available to help when I have problems with school work, or with my attendance or any other problems.	72	49
TEACHING		
The marking system used by teachers is a fair way of measuring what has been learned in the course.	90	32
Students drop out of courses because they do not understand the material being taught.	87	33
My subject teachers help me to understand my progress.	72	50
I receive the personal attention I need from teachers in such matters as help in class and extra help with my assignments.	69	53
My subject teachers are available to help me when I have problems with my school work.	77	45
The teaching staff at NHHS are concerned with students as individuals.	49	49
NHHS teaching staff try tyo make our school a pleasant and attractive place in which to be a student.	66	57
Classes are interesting.	77	63
Teachers explain their lessons so I am able to understand and do the work.	77	43
Support is provided by the teachers when I do not understand the wortk.	86	35
Homework is assigned to us on a regular basis.	52	69

The staff at NHHS apply the discipline policy in a fair and consistent manner.	53	69
PROGRAMS		
The school program has enough courses on native history and Cree language.	60	62
Computer courses should be offered.	115	9
Vocational courses should not be chosen by students because they are locked into the program.	98	23
STUDENT INVOLVEMENT		
Our high school provides a good variety of student activity.	72	50
Students in our school help in the planning of school activities.	73	49
I would like students to have input in decisions made by the administration of our school.	88	36
I am satisfied with the way the administration includes students in decisions that affect discipline, attendance and extra curricular activities.	61	57
Our student council makes decisions based on what the majority of students want.	41	59
Our student council is an active organizing group supported by the students.	66	57
There should be more activities geared toward non-sports activities than there are.	82	41
ADMINISTRATION		
The class periods at our high school are the right length.	64	48
The principal of our school is available to help when I have problems.	51	71
All teaching staff do their share in helping out with student activities.	69	53
Our teachers work well together and cooperate in co-curricular activities.	66	55
The principal and vice-principal try to make NHHS a pleasant and attractive place in which to be a student.	59	56

Our community is informed about the educational program of the school.	58	65
The educational concerns of the people of Norway House are taken seriously by the teachers and administration of our school.	53	72
The high school attendance policy encourages students to attend on a regular basis.	71	50
COMMUNITY SUPPORT		
Our community supports the efforts made by our high school.	60	63
Our community encourages students to complete grade 12 whether they are planning to continue their education or not.	79	55
There are not enough community planned activities for students to participate in after school.	88	34
PARENT SUPPORT		
Education and the reasons for continuing with school are discussed at home.	105	16
My parents/guardian encourage me to stay in school until I graduate.	110	12
My parents/guardian encourage me to attend regularly.	115	7
My parents/guardian encourage me to do my homework.	103	22
My parents/ guardian encourage me to study and achieve good marks.	101	20
My parents are generally satisfied with the programs and courses at high school.	101	20
My parents are generally satisfied with the discipline at our school.	55	67
STUDENT ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR		
The use of alcohol and/or drugs is a serious problem for the young people of Norway House.	80	41
Student absenteeism is a serious problem at NHHS.	85	36
I do at least one hour of homework every day.	49	78

Students feel that getting good marks is important.	95	26
Most students complete their homework for the next class.	64	57
Students study for exams and tests.	80	43

Part Two:
Recommendations

In 1988 the Norway House Indian Band will assume control of education for its young people, a move which is supported by eighty per cent of its adult members. With an immediate enrolment of 800 students, and the likelihood that enrolments will grow to 1,000 within five years, the Band has the potential to develop a high quality educational program at reasonable cost.

The Band will inherit a system of education marked by modern, well-maintained facilities and an efficient system of student transportation. Both of these will make the transition to local control easier. It will also inherit a system characterized by achievement difficulties and a lack of cooperation among parents, students and teachers. Developing a sense of educational partnership is absolutely essential, and must be an immediate priority, no matter who controls the system.

A clear focus on the quality of education under the the Band's leadership will contribute to this sense of partnership. There is a possibility of achieving broad agreement on the purposes of education in the community. The majority of adults and parents in Norway House want more emphasis on teaching students the skills needed to get a job and on preparing students to go to college or university.

On the immediate agenda are:

- the development of ways to improve home and school relationships, as well as to improve the community image of the high school;
- a consideration of counseling;
- a review of the high school program, including an examination of the nature of programs for mature students and returning high school drop-outs;
- an examination of vocational and industrial education;
- an assessment of provisions for special and remedial education; and
- a review of student promotion policies.

7. Community Relations

To be successful a school system must build support and good will for schools, as well as expand the learning opportunities available to students. Strong community involvement make schools more accessible places and builds support for education across the community. As community members come to know the school and to feel that they can contribute to its' success, negative feelings begin to diminish.

Activities that create cooperation among all interested community members shape a school-community culture that encourages a sense of caring and commitment to improve the quality of life.

When schools and communities work together there will be:

Benefits for Students

- additional services to students from community agencies
- increased individual student help
- better feelings about school on the part of students
- expanded learning opportunities in the community
- activities before and after school hours
- more productive use of school time

Benefits for Teachers

- more support for teachers within the school
- additional resources to support the teacher's classroom program
- more volunteers in the classroom
- more communication with parents and community members
- more use of the community as an extended classroom
- greater community sharing of the responsibilities for educating children

Benefits for Administrators and Management

- support in decision making by the people
- more efficient administration in schools
- additional services to the school by community agencies
- assistance in building support for the school
- representation in decision making for the school
- increased community support for the school
- quality programs that address the needs of the community

Benefits for Parents and Community

- additional services to parents and community at the local level
- an opportunity to be part of the decision making process at the school
- a chance to be part of their child's education
- shared responsibility for children
- shared responsibility for the educational process

All schools attempt to bring home and school together through exercises such as parent-teacher meetings, report cards, school newsletters and parent or student handbooks. There is as well a need to clarify the educational process that takes place in schools and to involve parents and the community at large more fully in the process.

Overcoming Barriers to Cooperation

The major barriers preventing more cooperative efforts are time limitations, fear of the school, and feelings of inadequacy. Teachers and school administrators already feel overburdened with school issues. The time of parents and community members is limited by their family and work commitments.

The impressions of school of many parents and community members are based on their own experiences in school. If these experiences were unhappy ones, they may be unwilling to risk involvement in schools as adults. This fear of becoming involved in the school is sometimes misunderstood by educators and is mislabelled as "parent apathy". Special efforts and new attitudes by educators are needed to help parents to overcome their fears and feelings of inadequacy.

Administrators and teachers may be reluctant to work with some parents and community members because of prior negative interactions. These negative feelings usually arise because too often school, parent and community interactions occur only when there are discipline problems. Both school staff, parents and community members may feel inadequate in relating to each other, and be uncertain of the resources they have to share.

These barriers must be overcome and the fears addressed if the school and community are to work together. These barriers can be overcome if both the school and community are willing to confront them and develop the strategies necessary to remove the barriers facing them.

School staff must be willing to accept the right and the educational importance of parents and the community to be involved; parents and community members must be willing to accept the responsibility of becoming involved. Education and learning do not cease when students leave the classroom. Classroom learning can be maximized only when home, school and community work together.

Time, effort and careful planning are needed to overcome the barriers to cooperation and joint action. Of critical importance are the development of a better community image for the schools, a program to involve parents and community members as school volunteers, and improved approaches to reporting to parents on the achievement of their children.

To begin this process of "bringing home" the school, it is necessary that the school build links to the larger community through the use of aggressive public relations campaigns that rely on parents and community members as promoters, communicators, and decision makers.

Norway House has a modern communications network that can be used to its fullest to promote awareness of what is taking place in its schools. Volunteers and community members can disseminate information that will inform the community of school activities.

Activities such as newsletters containing information about the school and what activities have taken place over a period of time may be included. It is vital that the language used in the newsletter be direct and easily translatable into the Cree language. It is also necessary that the contributions of the students, parents and community members be written in the Cree syllabics. Presently, Cree is being taught using Roman orthograhy (that is, standard English letters like those in which this report is written); this contributes to confusion in trying to standardize sounds in Cree and hinders the fluent recognition of the language. Cree is the first language of the majority of the community and must be seen and transmitted in its original form for further growth, retention and appreciation.

Cree syllabics has encouraged many elders and community people to take a keen interest in education. This is one barrier that has long been present in the education process of native students. Many parents and community members feel uncomfortable and inadequate when faced with having to express themselves in a language that is foreign to them. It brings back fears and resentfulness of their experiences in schools that did not allow the use, transmittal and nuturing of their language.

There is a need to use the telecommunications network to promote the aspirations of the school to the fullest. Community members, teachers, students, administrators and leaders should produce a videotape describing the school programs, the processes, requirements and general information about school goals organization and to the public. Again, it is important that both Cree and English be used and the content be easily understood.

Meetings about education should not only take place in the school. They should also be held in homes, community centers, and public gathering places. It is important that the promotion of community cohesiveness be promoted. Too often it has been assumed that education can only take place in the school. There is a need for the community to educate itself about the school and what it represents. To limit community members only to "visit" the school is self-defeating. In order to promote the school we must "bring" it into the community. This process eliminates people's inhibitions and allows for more direct contact. The knowledge and

support that is being pursued is right in the community and going out into the community is the only logical way of obtaining it.

Rather than hide school crises from the community, it is necessary to turn the community into a resource to help solve problems. It is important to place parents and interested members of the community on committees that make important policy decisions about curriculum, staff development, and new programs. It is of course necessary for the administrators and community leaders to outline the parameters by which these committees will operate.

There are many other examples for a creative program of community relations. Some have been tried at Norway House and have been successful to the extent that the community members have been informed of the many problems facing the staff and administrators. However, they have fallen short in creating a cooperative effort to resolve these problems and in building continuous support from the community at large.

Volunteers

It is desireable and necessary that all the schools in Norway House actively recruit volunteers from all parts of the community. It is not necessary that these people be parents of children in the schools. Rather it is important that they be viewed as willing and potential contributors to the school in a variety of ways.

The goals of a volunteer program are to assist teachers in nonprofessional duties, to offer individual help to students, to enrich the school program by making available the talents and resources of the community, and to stimulate the community toward more active support of the educational system.

Community members should be recruited to act as volunteers for clerical duties, to serve as assistants in various programs, to come to classrooms to teach about their special skills and so on.

Extensive opportunities should be made available to people to give of their time, experience and good will.

It is also desireable and necessary for agencies to provide release time to volunteers in order to nurture this concept of community involvement in the educational process.

Those community members who are not parents of school children, for example elders and retired business people, may be sought out to help with small groups in both the elementary and secondary schools. This can take the form of aiding teachers in art, science, reading and language arts. They can be requested to help in

special projects in the shops. They can serve as consultants of the real world and, more importantly, as confidantes of the young people with whom they work.

What are the results of a program such as this? In our experience, the elderly participants will find their lives revitalized. To be involved in the education process produces both a resurgence of energy for the adult and a wider view of the learning process for the child. Teachers will observe that their students are more caring and courteous. Students will express their appreciation for the additional personal attention and help they receive. They will also appreciate the talent, knowledge and caring attitude being fostered by their community members, a resource that has to a great extent been left dormant in the community of Norway House.

Reporting to Parents

Parents and teachers are partners in the education of children. When schools are successful, it is often because parents have given students a good foundation at home; when parents are successful they have the support of teachers and the school system in the sometimes difficult task of raising young people.

In most schools in Manitoba, parents receive progress reports on the work of their children two or three times a year. In between these reports parents and teachers have few positive educational contacts with each other, often with the result that learning problems don't come to the attention of parents until two or three months after they were first noticed.

The emphasis needs to change from one of periodic reporting to ongoing parent involvement in education.

The community surveys indicated that most parents would welcome such a change. This could mean regular telephone contacts and occasional home visits if parents wish, as well as formal meetings two or three time a year to discuss student achievement and development and how these can be improved. Teachers need to be sensitive about the advice they give to parents--there is little point in advising parents to read to children if those parents cannot afford to buy books or magazines for the home. Behavior problems need to be handled promptly--for example, giving students four or five chances to be truant from school before reporting their absence to parents only serves to foster bad habits.

In the junior and senior high school grades, contact with parents should include attention to career counselling. When they reach the junior high grades students begin to think seriously about their futures, the kinds of jobs they would like to have and the educational requirements of those jobs. Making good choices can be difficult. Because of these difficulties, students need support, not just career information, from their parents and teachers, as well as guidance counselors.

8. Counseling

Every day, children face problems in school. It is natural that these problems occur. Most of these problems are solved quickly with the support of family, friends and the school system itself. But other problems are deeper and the students who have them need help. And this is one reason why schools have counselors: to help students in need to develop insight about their problems and the self-understanding and responsibility to deal with them.

There is another reason. As students progress through school, especially through high school, new concerns beyond day-to-day problems begin to emerge. These new concerns deal with the future : will I ever finish high school? what courses will I take next? will I have to leave home when I finish school? how will I earn a living? how can I make the right decisions now in order to live a satisfactory life? These are future concerns. Here, the role of the counselor is to provide guidance to students, to give them information about career and vocational opportunities, to explore individual interests and abilities, to familiarize them with post-secondary education requirements, and to assist with proceeding beyond high school to a job or to further training.

These two aspects of counseling, individual help and career guidance, are interrelated. If students see no future after high school, school itself has little meaning for them other than as a place to meet friends; high school becomes a drop-in center. They see no value in their courses nor good in their teachers and have no respect for their school. They get bored, strike back and become discipline problems. Ultimately they drop out or are forced to withdraw from school.

Yet students who have developed vocational and career plans have goals which enable them to overcome short term frustrations. And the student who has developed insight and self-understanding has the tools to weather the crises and frustrations which seem to be a normal part of life in school.

Counselors have taken special training not only to deal with problems but to try to prevent their occurrence in advance. They have specialized in inter-personal relations and group dynamics, career and vocational planning, family life, school organization and community relations. The school counselor is a professional who works with administrators, teachers, other specialists, parents and the community in order to promote the welfare of the student. Although counselors are usually at the fore with problem students or students in crisis, their long term emphasis should be on prevention and development. As a confidante the counselor must strive for the trust and cooperation of others, especially students.

Policy Development

One of the first priorities is the development of a counseling policy: a written statement of what the Education Authority expects from its counseling services. The statement should be clear as to goals but general enough so that counselors can make use of their expertise in working towards those goals. A statement something like this might do: the primary purpose of counseling services is to assist and encourage students to acquire self-responsibility for their own development and to make wise career decisions.

It seems obvious to say something like this but it is necessary to write it out for the benefit of both the Education Authority and counseling personnel. Ultimately actions and activities of counselors should be defensible only on the basis of these goals--self-development and career planning. And ultimately the Education Authority should evaluate how good counseling services are on the basis of these goals.

The policy statement should be followed by guidelines that explain in a general way the duties and activities expected of counselors. The guidelines should be developed by the Education Authority in consultation with the school adminstration and the counseling staff in order to ensure that there is mutual understanding of procedures to be used and the resources needed to comply with the policy statement. The guidelines should reflect the philosophy the Education Authority and identify the priorities of the Authority for counseling activities. The guidelines should provide for periodic evaluation of the counseling program by the Education Authority. At least once a year there should be a written report prepared by the counseling department in consultation with the school administration. The Education Authority should then meet with the counseling department to discuss the report and reach agreement with all on what changes are needed.

The Education Authority must judge and evaluate the quality of its counseling services on the basis of the mandate it gives its counselors, and only on that basis. It is not easy to develop good policy and useful guidelines. It is even harder to then accept the fact that a bargain has then been struck between the two parties. But it must be done because this is a necessary condition of good leadership. Early efforts may be incomplete or inappropriate--changes can be made. If goodwill and persistence prevail, over time leadership will improve.

Leadership

A second major priority relates to leadership within the counseling department. A leader is needed-- someone who is an expert in the field. This means a certified teacher who has completed a graduate program in counseling. Studies by such a person would include courses in child development, social psychology, philosophies and theories of counseling and career development. Such a background would provide a vision beyond day-to-day problems, a reservoir of knowledge and the ability to guide and assist other counselors. This person would ultimately assume responsibility for the conduct of counseling affairs.

The counseling head should be of native origin. There are many reasons for this. First of all, the person would serve as a role model for the students. Secondly, research has demonstrated that there is a significant relationship between how students feel about their counselor, either positive or negative, and the effectiveness of the counseling. Many traditional methods of counseling do not consider the Native world view or values. Students do not identify with the counselor. They do not experience insight and understanding. Thirdly, the chances are a Native head counselor has experienced many of the frustrations and alienation Norway House students now have.

It would be a mistake to regard the counseling head as some kind of manager who spends all his or her time dealing with other counselors and other agencies. For one thing the school can not afford it. More importantly the head must lead by example. Almost all of the time the head should be dealing with students and student affairs. But the head must be a leader, and assist, advise, support and evaluate the efforts of others.

Re-Entry Programs

High drop-out rates signify that the school is not meeting the needs of many students. In a sense current drop-out rates are inflated. Many students drop-out, re-enter in September, stay two weeks and drop-out again. Some students have repeated this process for as long as three, four and five years. This is bad. It reinforces the alienation of the returning students. It is a bad example for their peers. It disrupts the learning climate of the school. But it is a mistake to think that these students return only to cause trouble or to keep warm. They probably have a genuine desire to do better at the outset. But they lack the ability or will to do so. They soon become discouraged and drop-out again. It is a very complicated problem.

Reasons for earlier drop-outs must be determined and corrective action taken. For example students planning to return in September might be required to give notice of their intentions as early as May or June. The counselor would do an assessment of learning abilities, study skills, physical condition, achievement levels, home life, career plans and so on. Then remedial action could be taken. The reason for the earlier failure may be poor eye-sight, or lack of study skills, or low reading levels, or alienation and lack of career plans. It may have to be done in September along with the rush of all the other things related to school opening. In either case the Education Authority should consider a special preparatory course for these returning students, lasting as long as a year, successful completion of which would enable the student to enter Grade Ten. It would be an up-grading class. The emphasis would be on students learning to take responsibility for their own education. The content would probably include reading and writing skills, mathematics and study skills. It should include sessions on career planning and native culture in order to diminish the feeling of alienation that many of these students must have.

The Education Authority should consider segregating these students in a separate class and perhaps even a separate building. It would demonstrate that students must learn eventually that they, and they alone, must take on the responsibility of getting a good education in order to lead a good life. Segregation would remove the disruptive influence of these students from the normal stream of school life.

A Guidance Course

Attendance and achievement require the immediate attention of the Education Authority. They are interrelated as has been noted. Attendance and achievement will improve with improved student motivation. The Education Authority migh look at motivation as being of two types for planning purposes: internal and external. Internal motivation might depend on how students feel about themselves today. This is where the counseling role of personal development is applied. External motivation might be looked on as how the student feels about the future. This is where the counseling role of guidance (or career planning) is applied. Of course they really can't be separated but it might help to look at it that way for planning purposes.

How can motivation be improved? Internal motivation is highest when students believe they can succeed and they have the learning skills to do so. External motivation is strong when students have plans for their future and becomes stronger as these plans become more realistic. Sometimes both forms develop, almost by accident, within the student culture of the high school. This culture does not appear to be strong at Norway House High School.

There is a remedy. A guidance course could be developed and taught in the normal way of all courses to all students entering Grade Nine. Early in the year the

emphasis might be on personal factors, such as the development of student profiles, interest and ability inventories, study skills, family life, homework and so on. Much of this activity would be diagnostic in nature leading to student insight and understanding. Where deficiencies are uncovered remedial treatement should be immediately available. Later the course could move on to career planning during which students become familiar with the various fields, the academic requirements for post-secondary education, how to prepare a resume, how to get a job and so on. The aim of this part of the course would be to awaken students interests in what they will do when they finish school and how they will go about doing it.

The course should be taught by the head counselor. In the final analysis the head must be responsible for the success of the counseling program. Early contact with new students would make the counseling head familiar with their needs and potentials. A bond would form which would be a valuable source of support and encouragement in later school years. Early contact would also mean that the head counselor would know how well the counseling program was working and what changes could be made to make it work better.

If a guidance course is not immediately possible then some other structural form of early student contact at the Grade Nine level must be devised. It might be a two or three week orientation period during which student profiles are developed, achievement levels are assessed and study skills are examined. There should be provision for immediate remedial action where needed. Grade Nine should be looked on as a preparatory year for high school. It is important that these students get a good start during the first few weeks of school.

Teacher Advisor System

A recent innovation at the high school which has had very good initial success and offers much promise for the future is the teacher advisor program. The basic aim of the program is to improve home-school communications. The program works as follows. At the beginning of the year groups of students, about five to fifteen in number, are assigned to a particular teacher. Students have some say in the selection process. The students are from all grades. The teacher then has the responsibility of contacting the parents for reporting purposes. These contacts are made via the student, telephone or radio. An appointment is arranged at which teacher and parent can discuss student progress.

The program is highly successful. Contacts with parents are ninety percent or more. It is interesting to note that more visists take place at the home than at the school. The program is an extra burden for the teachers yet their willingness to support it reflects the dedication and professional attitude of the staff. There is a double benefit in these visits. Not only do the parents become more familiar with the school, teachers gain a better understanding of the problems parents have in trying to encourage their childen to get a good education. Consideration might also

xe given to use the teacher advisor system to involve parents more directly with the school.

Job Descriptions

The Education Authority, in cooperation with the school administration, should develop a plan to make sure the special talents and experience of counselors are not wasted. Otherwise their energies are easily diverted to emerging crises and the career development of the students will suffer. Such a plan might be called a job description and should list the priorities the counselors should follow in carrying out their duties.

The current job description for the high school guidance counelor is as good a place as any to begin:

- to advise and assist students in the selection of high school programs which are best suited to their interests and abilities
- to provide students with advise, support or encouragement as needed, to facilitate their success both in school and out
- to maintain a system of communication and referral between the high school and other academic, social or economic institutions thoughout the province and, where applicable, throughout the nation
- to assist teachers in the development and deployment of guidance materials or career information on a regular basis
- to ensure that students and parents have sufficient information to make decisions regarding student courses, including the relationship between the courses and entry into post secondary institutions
- to ensure that parents are aware both of course selections and deletions and their impact on future decisions.

The current job description for the Home-School Counselor states that the most important role of the postion is that of a liaison between the school and the home with the students' and social interests in mind. The Counselor will develop and maintain open and honest communication with parents regarding students' academic progress, attendance, and motivation. The job decription for the Home-School counselor lists five purposes for the position:

- ensure that parents are aware of course selection and withdrawals, and their impact on future decisions
- assist teachers and administrators in reporting student progress
- communicate with teachers re: parental directions and decisions
- visit homes to discuss school matters with parents and guardians
- provide encouragement for students to complete their grades and courses.

Facilities

The counseling offices and the career resources room should be consolidated in to a counseling suite. Such an arrangement would make career resources more easily available and bring students in contact with counselors on a more informal basis.

9. High School Programs

Single high schools in small communities are highly visible, being focal points for community aspirations and flash points for community conflicts about education. The lack of employment opportunities in small communities makes vocational and occupational programming difficult. Average per pupil expenditures are difficult to maintain at a reasonable level.

These problems are not unique to Norway House. Throughout Manitoba there is uncertainty about the objectives and programs of high schools. All high schools recognise that fewer than 30 per cent of their graduates continue on to post-secondary education and wonder whether they are doing enough for the other 70 per cent who wish to enter directly the world of work. All high schools are struggling with the need to adapt to a diverse student body--to slower and faster students, to students who are more and less motivated, to a wide variety of career interests, to students who are clear about their objectives and those who are undecided.

These struggles are particularly great for small high schools in small communities. When enrolments fall below about 250 students, it becomes difficult to offer a wide variety of courses and programs of good quality at reasonable cost. In many small communities, employment prospects are limited and this makes it difficult for students to see real value in education.

Because these problems are widespread throughout Manitoba, band control in Norway House, by itself, will not make them disappear. What band control will bring is the political commitment of the community to bear on these problems. Band control must increase the flow of community energy toward improving high school education. If community needs become the focus of action, the high school will become more responsive and, we hope, new solutions for old problems will be found.

Student Registration in Programs

In general, in order to graduate high school students must complete 20-21 credits in a program. Within programs there are courses which are required and others which may be chosen by students in the light of their interests or course availability.

Students entering the high school program or who have earned less than the seven credits will be registered as Grade Ten students. Students who have more than seven credits but are not eligible to graduate will register in Grade Eleven. Students who have earned twelve to fourteen credits and are eligible for graduation in June will be registered in Grade Twelve. This policy determines the large number of Grade Ten students enrolled at the high school.

Of the 113 students enrolled in Grade Ten, only 62 were enrolled in Grade Nine last year. The remaining 51 are students who registered at the high school before and have returned. Some of these students have registered in Grade Ten more than two times. The pattern of registering and dropping out is common.

Programs

Norway House High School offers six different programs for students in Grades Ten through Twelve. They are the University Entrance Program, the General Program, the Business Education Program, as Specific Skills and Basic Business Concepts Program, the Vocational-Industrial Program and a Mature Student Program.

The school year is divided into two semesters; students can take up to four courses in each. For Grade Ten students the four core courses (Mathematics, Science, English and Geography) are non-semestered, that is they are taught as full year courses. Because of the small size of the high school, somewhat different courses are offered in each semester, a fact which calls for careful planning and clear communication to students and their parents. Full program information, along with course descriptions, is contained in an excellent Norway House High School publication, The 1987-88 Student Handbook.

Planning for Improvement

The people of Norway House want a high school in which programs meet the requirements of the Province of Manitoba and in which standards for achievement and graduation are equal to those elsewhere in the province. These objectives are shared by Frontier School Division, which has been responsible for education in the community since 1968. Although the results under Frontier School Division have been disappointing, the Division's objectives have been the same as those of the community. The current program of the Norway House High School has been structured according to these objectives. This suggests that the Band should begin its planning by looking closely at current programs and how they might be improved, not how they might be replaced. There is another reason for a cautious approach to high school programs. The Province of Manitoba is now in the middle of a thorough review of high school education. It would be unwise to develop a dramatic new design for secondary education until the work of that review is completed.

Student Attitudes

The students at Norway House High School are generally very pleasant. They do not appear to be as oriented toward scholastic achievement as they are to social contacts. Some students interviewed indicated that while they are registered in school, they do not attend classes and they do not intend to. They will continue in attendance until they are expelled or they will drop out. This is a very serious education problem. It is also a serious financial concern; each student registered and continuing to be on the nominal role becomes a student for whom tuition must be paid.

Parent Relations

The major educational contacts between the school and parents are through the teacher advisory system which began in September 1986. A teacher is assigned to groups of 12-15 students. The teacher and the students meet at the parents' homes. This has the potential to create excellent home and school relationships. The home-school counselor also provides for liaison between home and school.

Physical Facilities

The Norway House High School building needs some adaptation for proper program offerings. The art room is not adequate and the home economics facilities are not suitable for offering a complete program. A major concern is the use of the large multi-purpose area for socializing among the students.

We recommend that:

- renovations be made to provide for an adequate home economics space. This might be done adjacent to the present child development center space
- the existing art room be expanded to provide for adequate space for teaching an art program
- provisions be made for a supervised study hall.

Student Enrolment and Registration

The present policy which encourages students to register each year and then drop out must be reconsidered. The Norway House High School must be seen as an education center rather than a social center.

We recommend that:

- all students enrolling in Grade Ten register for a minimum of 7 credits
- students not be allowed to enrol in Grade Ten more than two times
- a program be available for non-performing students. This program must be located in a facility which is not part of the Norway House High School
- some provisions be made for adults who wish to re-enter the educational system.

Program

The present practice of offering the university entrance, general, business education, specific skills, and vocational programs may not be practical for a school with the enrolment of Norway House High School. The small numbers of students registered in some classes make these classes very expensive on a per student basis.

We recommend that:

- the Norway House Education Authority establish priorities among the courses and programs to be offered in the High School

- the Norway House Education Authority establish a policy governing tuition, transportation and living expenses for students wishing to take programs which cannot be made available locally

- the Norway house Education Authority establish a counseling office in Winnipeg where, I assume, most students would be enrolled when programs cannot be made available locally.

It also seems to us that there would be merit in:

- requiring a one credit course in Family Life Education for all students

- expanding the scope of the Child Development course presently offered

- encouraging greater enrolments in Cree culture and language courses.

Mature Student Program

If recommendations from this report are implemented there will be many young adults who will not be attending Norway House High School. This will lead to a need for developing an educational program for these people.

We recommend that:

- a person be employed by the Norway House Education Authority for the purpose of preparing a long range plan for adult education

• a community skills program be developed in the areas of: (a) introducing job skills in different trades; and (b) social development such as community planning, recreation, family life, alcohol and drug abuse and financial management

• guidance and counseling services be readily available to people who have dropped out of school.

Staffing

Since all of the present staff are employees of Frontier School Division, the Norway House Education Authority will have to employ staff for the 1988-89 school year. This process should begin early in 1988. There are many excellent staff members in Norway House High School. These people, if they choose to stay, should be given careful consideration.

We recommend that the Norway House Education Authority:

• develop an employee benefit package that will have incentives to attract superior and qualified teachers to teach in Norway House

• begin a program to orient all staff members to working in a band-operated educational system. This program should consist of a minimum of two days prior to school opening in September.

Student Attitudes

We recommend that:

• the Student Council examine ways by which students might accept greater responsibility for their own learning

• members of the Council and the Norway House Education Authority meet with students early in the school year to inform them that high standards of behavior and achievement are expected in Norway House High School.

Community Relations

A central aspect of band control of education is community involvement with the school. Norway House High School will be an extension of the community and not a part of Frontier School Division. If improvements are to occur, there must be more information about education made available to the community.

There also must be a significant increase in community participation. This participation can include, for example:

- guest lectures from leaders and people working in the many occupations within the community
- counseling from elders
- assistance at the Child Development Center
- cooperation between the community and the vocational shops in utilizing projects completed by the shops.

10. Vocational and Industrial Education

Vocational and industrial education in Norway House is less developed than it should be. While we understand the emphasis the Band places upon university entrance programs and courses, and endorse its commitment to the development of its own leaders and professionals, preparation for the world of work is an important aspect of high school education.

Early Exploration of Occupations

A commitment should be made to introduce an innovative pilot program entitled "Orientation to Vocations or Exploration of Vocations". Such a program should be designed to aid all incoming Grade Nine and all first time Grade Ten students in

gaining occupational awareness, interest in occupations, and better understanding their own interests and abilities as well as in making wise career choices.

The program should be a year-long and could be divided into terms of several weeks duration. Students should be rotated through a minimum of four areas. The key here is flexibility, and varying the program modules according to the needs of individuals and the group. Such a program can be coordinated by the school counselor, in cooperation with vocational, industrial and other teachers in the school.

Industrial Arts	Woodworking Arts and Crafts Welding Small Engines Microcomputers Electronics Drafting, Blueprint Reading, Design
Foods and Human Nutrition	Cakes and Pastry Production Meats, Poultry and Fish Preparation Bachelor Survival Cooking Skills Fast Food Management Commercial Cooking
Vocational Automechanics	Welding Technology Autobody Fundamentals Recreation Vehicle Servicing Power Mechanics Diesel Generator Technology
Building Construction	Carpentry Plumbing and Wiring Bricklaying and Drywalling Sheet Metal and Painting Structural Design and Soil Testing Surveying
Home Economics	Clothing and Textiles Interior Decorating
Human Services	Child Care Teaching Care for the Elderly
Science	Photography Laboratory Science
Business	Typing and Keyboarding Marketing

Vocational Driver Education

Transportation plays an important role in society. Every attempt should be made to offer Grade Ten students an elective course which emphasizes driving skills and attitudes, making students more concerned about their driving. The students would also acquire a general knowledge of the automobile.

Vocational Aerospace Education

Norway House, because of its northern location and proximity to an airport, may be an ideal site to establish a one year aerospace education program. Such an advanced vocational-technical education program would: (1) dispel any vocational image concerns; (2) provide Norway House High school visibility; and (3) be challenging and attractive to adolescents and adults in the region who have an interest in aviation technology.

Participants would receive exposure to aircraft theory, blueprint and schematics,basic metalworking, safety, assembly, welding, engine troubleshooting and airport management techniques. The program activities could revolve primarily around the complete construction of a small airplane. In addition to building the airplane, there should be a pre-flight orientation and flight time set aside.

Vocational Building Construction

The building construction program needs to be channeled in two different yet related routes, Home Renovation Technology and Home Building Technology. If the high school's goal is to improve the self-concepts and career-work attitudes of students while encouraging academic achievement until graduation or gainful employment, then it should consider the following.

Potentially, students could be designated to renovate local homes, earning school credits while learning real job skills and improving their neighborhoods.

Vocational students could be assigned to work on homes (interior and exterior) under close supervision of the building construction intructor. Students enrolled in this program could spend half of each day at the construction site and the remaining time in classrooms. What better way to allow for development in areas that might not receive the attention otherwise? Why not feature new roofs, new fences, painting, insulation, and modern kitchens? Why not send a requisition form to families, asking them to specify the repairs needed? This type of vocational program should function very well at Norway House High School and, if properly established, it could serve as an employment vehicle year round.

The second option is similar to the first with the difference being that students would be designated to build new homes. Why not learn the building trades first hand by constructing a home for a family? Students involved in this activity will be exposed to all phases of construction including machinery, power and hand tools and blueprint reading. With the experiences gained from building several units students would be able to form their own working groups for community building enterprises. The building contruction program utilizes various materials to achieve its in-house learning objectives. Why not channel these into a new home built by vocational students?

Automotive Restoration and Mechanics Program

The purpose of the restoration program is to teach students automotive restoration techniques. Why not locate and obtain a 1966 Ford Mustang hardtop? Imagine the craftsmanship, quality of work, artistic abilities, attendance, dedication, patience, team attitude and pride needed. The focus of such an option would be on metal finishing, financial assessment of vehicles, painting, trim, frame straightening, machining of parts, overhaul and sale of an automobile. The basic auto curriculum should give emphasis to autobody skills: autobody filling techniques (for example diagnosing, soldering, plastic filling, fiberglassing, glazing, priming and basic refinishing).

The Norway House High School automechanics program is designed to provide pre-employment experiences in the internal combustion engine, plus a good general education for citizenship. Its facilities are truly representative of current automotive work repair sites. We would like to see the following items being given higher priority.

The automechanic shop could simulate the community work world by having students take on diversified functions other than only learning a trade. This could lead to creating responsibilities such as: general manager, service manager, appointments secretary and parts clerk. Time sheets and work order sheets could be incorporated into the educational setting.

This program needs to broaden its scope by also teaching automotive students entrepreneurship concepts. These students must learn how to establish their own small businesses in the automotive field. Due to the location and make up of the community, teachers must search for alternative avenues which not only stimulate educational and social change, but lead to self-sufficiency. Why not examine the feasibility of creating some of the following small companies:

- towing service (one truck)

- Mobile Auto Doctor (one van refurbished for tune-ups, oil and filter changes, house calls during the day or evening, 24 hours)

- Used Car Dealer (cars bought at auto auctions by the band but repaired by Norway House High School automechanic students to A-1 condition)

- Scrap Yard Enterprise (metals, car parts, etc.)?

In any of the above instances contacts should also be established with a Junior Achievement Branch.

Every effort must be made to include an annual supervised work practicum of 4-6 weeks in length into the automotive program. A shorter practicum would not provide the essential elements needed to fully experience the on-the-job components.

Regarding maintenance of vehicles, every effort should be made by the automechanic program to give priority to helping the community (labor free installation, cost of parts only). Such an effort would not only assure another constant source or flow of vehicles, but a close working relationship with the community. What better way to create public relations!

Commercial Foods

A commitment should be made to reintegrate this back into the mainstream of Norway House High School. The commercial foods program must be given a new name, "Foods and Human Nutrition", to reflect the broad options which would be available to students. Consideration must be given to:

- including the "Foods and Human Nutrition" cluster as part of the "Exploration of Occupations" program

- developing modular courses which would enable the vocational area to adapt rapidly if community interests change or if there are students with special needs to be accommodated

- requesting elders to participate and help with the delivery of specific content. This would be an ideal opportunity for youth to continue exchanging and learning from the elders

- including annual supervised work practicums of 4-6 weeks in length for all participants

- giving students the option to serve meals (for example in a restaurant or the hospital) thereby potentially opening and exploring related career opportunities (for example, waiter, waitresses, or cashiers)

- including entrepreneurship concepts in the program and exploring the feasibilty of establishing small community enterprises run by the instructor and vocational students, for example food delivery services, mobile catering service, feast catering and meals on wheels for those who are infirm.

Native Vocational Teacher Education Training

A number of Norway House adults through formal or informal training have become skilled craftsmen. Yet how many of them are aware that with addtional teacher education and training they could become qualified vocational education instructors? A concerted effort should be made by the Norway House Education Authority to examine this sector of teacher education.

Vocational Education Advisory Committee

It is vital that a vocational and industrial education advisory committee be established at Norway House High School. The main purpose of such a committee would be to provide a link between the school and the community that will assist the vocational areas in maintaining desirable programs. Some examples of functions and activities of such a committee are:

Advise teachers	review program curriculum on adequacy of facilities and equipment assess programs
Advise students	help with student placements for practicums or program graduates aid in obtaining sponsors scholarships, prizes

Assist Community	provide better communications advise on new programs needed or closings provide objective evaluations and recommendations identify first-hand business/community concerns or needs

The advisory council should meet a minimum of twice a year. Generally a vocational and industrial education advisory committee consists of five to seven persons. The responsibilities of such a committee should be clearly stated.

11. Special Education

Norway House has many of the ingredients necessary for the development of a successful special education program. Most importantly, teachers believe in the value of maintaining students in regular classroom programs. They feel that they must play an active and responsible role in helping children who are encountering school difficulties. Additionally, the teachers have a strong commitment to developing the additional competencies needed for a successful program.

Special Education Program Development

At the time this report was written 78 students in Norway House schools were identified as encountering educational difficulties serious enough to require additional (low-incidence) provincial funding. In addition, in the Special Education Survey of Jack River and Rossville Schools, teachers reported that approximately 30 percent of their students did not have the skills necessary to perform well in the education program. They also reported, on average, that they had 4 students in their class that needed special education assistance. These numbers are similar to those reported by schools throughout Manitoba.

If the number of students reported as having problems is accurate, there will never be enough trained special educators or enough funding to provide individualized instruction for these students. It is obvious that any special education program developed by the Norway House Education Authority must be one to provide services that assist classroom teachers to resolve and prevent problems in their classrooms. A special education program that works in this way assists all student with learning, not just those classified as handicapped or exceptional.

We recommend that the Norway House Education Authority establish as its initial priority the development of a consultative-collaborative resource teacher program. Resource teachers play a pivotal role in the delivery of all special education services. Once a quality resource teacher program is in place, the Education Authority will be in a better position to decide what additional special education services are required.

Resource teachers who work in a consultative-collaborative fashion don't solve problems for others. They provide assistance and specialized skills to help others become better able to solve their own problems. Resource teachers who play their role in this way join their specialized knowledge and skills with those of classroom teachers. Through this joining together, resource teachers and classroom teachers gain new skills and understandings. This serves to create schools in which the skills of all the teachers are continually improving and, as a result, schools become more capable of effectively dealing with individual student differences. When all members of a school staff become more competent, many students share in the benefits and there is less need for trained specialists.

Also, resource teacher programs that assist teachers in becoming more competent do more than just remedy problems. Improved competence leads to the prevention of problems. The prevention of problems is likely the most important outcome stemming from successful resource teacher programs.

In effect, a successful resource teacher program serves a continuous staff training function. In such programs, resource teachers consult and collaborate with teachers and each develops additional skills. Classroom teachers become more capable of diagnosing problems, matching their instruction with student needs and monitoring student progress.

Teacher responses to the Special Education Survey indicated that Norway House teachers are well aware of the need to acquire additional skills. They know this will help them deal more adequately with individual student difficulties. On the survey, the vast majority of teachers stressed the need for a resource teacher program that assisted them in gaining additional competence. The response that seems most representative of teacher opinion was, "the resource teacher program should support the classroom teacher in providing appropriate programming for students with special needs."

Further information from the survey emphasized the teachers' desire to become more competent in dealing with students encountering difficulty. The majority felt that special education funds could best be spent on such staff training. A somewhat smaller number felt that these funds should be spent to hire additional special education and support service personnel. This indicates that while the teachers do see a need to hire more special education personnel, their first priority is to become more capable of handling their own problems. We commend the teachers at Norway House for seeking to play an active and responsible role in serving the needs of all their students.

We recommend that the Norway House resource teacher program provide services that emphasize helping students remain in the regular classroom. The goals of the program should be to help all students to learn well and prevent them from being segregated into special classes or programs. This is called "mainstreaming" because it keeps children in the main flow of the school program.

The mainstreaming function of resource teacher programs has been accepted by professionals throughout Canada and the rest of the world. Researchers have found that most children perform better when they are taught in the regular classroom program. They learn as much or more, academically and socially, in the regular program.

Responses on the Special Education Survey show that the teachers at Norway House support the mainstreaming of students with special needs. The majority of the teachers that responded to the survey felt that the regular classroom was the most effecitve site for meeting the special needs of students. This indicates they understand that programs for students encountering difficulties are most effective when implemented in the regular classroom, and that this requires adjustments in regular classroom conditions. A minority of teachers expressed the opinion that resource teachers or other special educators should have sole responsibility for teaching students with special needs; this would be an inappropriate approach for Norway House to adopt.

There will be some instances when students will require services delivered outside the regular classroom. However, we recommend that no students be removed from the regular classroom until serious efforts have been made to accommodate them in the regular program and these efforts have failed. When students are removed from the regular program, it is the responsibility of the resource teacher and other special education staff to provide help that will enable them to return to the regular program as soon as possible.

Mastery Instruction for All Students

A promising instructional system is "mastery learning and instruction." This system, which is described in Table Eighteen, has been used in many communities in Canada and in various countries throughout the world. The basic belief of those using this system is that under appropriate learning conditions almost all students can and will learn what is expected of them. Research has shown that in schools using a mastery learning and instruction system, 80 percent of the students mastered the basic objectives of the school program. Not only did these students master expected skills, they performed at a level of excellence that only 20 percent of students had performed at under ordinary instructional conditions.

Table Eighteen

The Conditions and Attitudes Needed for Mastery Learning and Instruction

Stage One: DEVELOPING NEW ATTITUDES

A. About the value of education
B. About student ability to learn
C. About the ability of teachers to teach

Stage Two: DECIDING WHAT TO TEACH

A. Establishing general educational goals
B. Developing specific learning activities
C. Deciding what mastery performance is
D. Developing tasks and tests to measure student learning

Stage Three: DECIDING HOW TO TEACH

A. Planning small teaching units
B. Developing progress tests
C. Developing corrective teaching procedures

Stage Four: TEACHING WITH MASTERY PROCEDURES

A. Teaching students about mastery learning and instruction
B. Teaching the mastery unit
C. Giving progress tests
D. Providing corrective help

Stage Five: TESTING FOR MASTERY, RECORDING MASTERY AND REPORTING MASTERY

A. Giving the final test
B. Recording student mastery
C. Reporting student mastery

Mastery learning and instruction will not solve all achievement and school problems at Norway House. It will, however, greatly reduce the number of students that fail and the number requiring intensive resource teacher assistance. We recommend that the Norway House Education Authority adopt a mastery learning and instruction system for all their schools.

Staffing the Resource Teacher Program

There are two distinct groups of students in Norway House schools needing resource teacher services. A large group of students (approximately 30%) are achieving below acceptable skill levels. These students do not have serious handicaps or problems. Their problems stem from the fact that they have not mastered basic learning skills.

A second group of students, those receiving low-incidence provincial funding (78 students) have more serious learning and behavior problems (for example, serious hearing impairment). Each group has quite different needs and therefore, require different types of resource teacher services.

Basic Skills Resource Teachers

Those students having basic skill needs would benefit best from a classroom-based program directed at the mastery of basic skills. In such a program, classroom teachers maintain major responsibility for the students' programs. The primary role of resource teachers is the provision of assistance that enables classroom teachers to fulfill their responsibility. Earlier in this paper we discussed the ways in which resource teachers should provide this assistance. We recommend that the Norway House Education Authority hire one resource for every 150 students enrolled in their schools and that the major objective of their services be to assist teachers with the improvement of instruction for students encountering basic skills problems.

At present the Province of Manitoba provides grants for one resource teacher per 325 enrolled students. While Indian and Northern Affairs Canada has promised to ensure that its funding will be equivalent to that of the province, We feel that because of characteristics such as remoteness, they should fund band schools at higher levels. Higher levels of funding could be viewed as compensatory in nature. The Province of Manitoba does provide compensatory education funds to schools having characteristics similar to those in Norway House schools. The Norway House Band should consider negotiating from such a position during discussions about local control.

Resource Teachers for Students with Serious Learning and Behavior Problems

Those students encountering difficulties of a more serious nature will benefit from the resource teacher services mentioned above; however, they and their teachers may require additional services. More joint efforts between resource teachers and classroom teachers are necessary. The programs these students receive require a great deal of long range planning. Special individualized programs must be developed and often the physical enviroment of the regular classroom must be adapted in order to accommodate these programs. These activities require coordinated and cooperative efforts among all those involved. Once programs are

implemented, frequent monitoring and classroom observations are required to evaluate program effectiveness. Students encountering serious school problems often require direct instructional services from the resource teacher. Finally, parents of students encountering serious problems should have frequent contact with those in charge of their child's program.

It is obvious that resource teachers cannot deal with all the students encountering basic skills problems and the large number of students having serious learning and behavior problems. We recommend that the Norway House Education Authority use some of the special education funds they receive to hire additional resource teachers whose primary function would be the provision of services for students with moderate and severe learning and behavior problems. We suggest that one additional resource teacher be hired for each 15 students encountering serious learning and behavior problems. If compensatory education funds are used, at least in part, to hire resource teachers to assist teachers with students experiencing basic skills problems, more special education monies would be available to hire resource teachers for students experiencing serious difficulties. This point should also be made when negotiating with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

Teacher Assistants

Many of the students encountering serious learning and behavior problems will continue to require teacher assistant services. We feel that well trained assistants, who are effectively supervised by resource teachers and classroom teachers, are an asset to the Norway House program. These assistants should play an active role in the consultation and collaboration amongst resource teachers, classroom teachers and parents. However, we wish to suggest some cautions in the use of teacher assistants.

Teacher assistants should never have sole responsibility for program planning or instruction. Their role should be that of assisting those who are responsible for such activities. In order to avoid the inappropriate use of teacher assistants, we recommend that the role of teacher assistants be clearly defined and documented.

Teacher assistants should not be used in ways that isolate students from their classmates. Instead, they should be used in ways that allow the students in their charge to function in an integrated and cooperative fashion with their classmates. Teacher assistants should be viewed as para-professionals who have a need for inservice education and professional growth. Teacher assistants who are treated in this fashion become valuable community spokespersons for schools and children.

Teacher responses to the Special Education Survey support the above recommendations. When asked to select the most effective staffing arrangements for their special needs students, a large majority chose arrangements in which classroom teachers and special educators had joint responsiblity for students or in which classroom teachers had sole responsibility. The first choice of these teachers was to have an instructional aide, supervised by the classroom teacher and a special educator, assist students with special needs. The second choice was a staffing arrangement in which the classroom teacher and a special educator were jointly

responsible for assisting students. The third choice was that the classroom teacher should have sole responsibility.

The majority of the teachers at Norway House expressed ideas similar to those of professionals who have developed state-of-the-art special education service delivery models. That view is that regular classroom teachers and special educators through consultation and responsible collaboration can more effectively assist students encountering difficulties.

Hiring and Training Staff

Successful special education programs require highly trained and competent staff. Since resource teachers play such a pivotal role in these programs, they must have many skills -- skills that improve student learning and equally important, skills that gain them the respect of the other teachers with whom they work. Resource teachers must have the ability to:

- analyze instructional tasks in order to specify their component parts;

- analyze instructional procedures and classroom conditions in order to provide those necessary for successful learning;

- analyze student performance in order to identify error and success patterns and student reactions to various instructional procedures;

- design learning progams that match student needs and monitor the effectiveness of these programs; and

- consult and collaborate with other professionals in ways that foster growth and development in problem solving skills.

Hiring resource teachers with these abilities might prove difficult. Many qualified and competent resource teachers are unwilling to work in remote areas. One option the Education Authority has is to provide competent members of the existing staff with the opportunity and funds to acquire the needed competencies and qualifications. Other options might be pay incentives for resource teachers or other staff incentive plans. Whatever it takes, the Education Authority must hire qualified and highly competent resource teachers.

Successful special education programs are not only staffed by competent special educators, but also by competent regular classroom teachers. Quality special education programs are joint efforts and provide for a sharing of expertise. Administrators in charge of such programs provide opportunities for classroom teachers to improve skills and develop the values necessary for program success. We recommend that the Education Authority establish in-service training programs

that help all teachers acquire more competence in differentiating instruction and the values necessary for the implementation of a successful special education program. Responses on the Special Education Survey indicated that the teachers at Norway House seek additional staff training. A large majority of the teachers expressed a strong desire to improve their competence. Additionally, many staff member want the Education Authority to provide them with more staff development opportunities. By doing so, the Education Authority can reinforce and futher develop existing positive staff attitudes. Positive teacher attitudes are key components of effective schools.

12. Promotion and Retention Policy

No student likes to be held back: students who have been failed begin to question their abilities and, perhaps, to redefine their self-images, seeking places other than schools in which they might experience success. Parents see their hopes for their children begin to fade. And the decision to retain a student is always difficult for teachers: the failure of a student leads teachers to confront their own inabilities to help some students, to wonder whether other teachers could have been more successful or whether they could have been more successful under other circumstances, or to question their compassion and educational expectations.

It is because of concerns such as these that students are sometimes given a social pass. But social promotion makes teaching more difficult for the receiving teacher, devalues educational effort and achievement, may erode the motivation of other students who have worked hard for their success, and does not give socially promoted students a fair chance to achieve later academic success. In the long run, social promotion hurts students and the community.

Failure and social promotion raise difficult questions about academic standards as well as about teacher, family and student responsibilities for learning. These questions are of special importance today, given the achievement problems being experienced in Norway House's educational system.

This concern for educational standards in Norway House is to be welcomed. At the same time, there is a danger is that standards will be pursued by failing students rather than by altering teaching strategies, improving student attitudes toward education and increasing parental commitment to education. If students will be required to repeat a year or more of schooling without at the same time receiving the assistance which they so obviously need, some will be left behind to pay the price of renewed educational standards.

This suggests the need for a promotion policy which is achievement oriented. Neither failure nor social promotion is desirable educationally. The objective should

be to develop approaches which attempt to eliminate the need for failure in the first place. It seems more appropriate to develop promotional policies which include a focus on achievement, an emphasis on instruction over retention, and a concern for the overall effectiveness of schools.

At the same time, it is likely that some students will not meet the educational expectations of their grade. Failure or social promotion will then have to be considered.

Social promotion or grade retention are both complex: either, or neither, can be educationally appropriate, depending upon the individuals and circumstances involved. Any policy should reflect this through sensitivity to what is best in individual cases. Because of this concern for what is most appropriate in individual student cases, there also will be a need for processes which allow individual students and their families, as well as teachers and administrators, to participate in retention and promotion decisions.

Retention should be undertaken only after all other instructional avenues have been explored and only for the purposes of assisting students to master the requirements necessary for success at the next level. Social promotion may be necessary in some cases, for example when students would be too old for their classmates, when parents object strongly to failure and will not support the school, or when students lack the ability to be academically successful.

A Model Policy

The policies which are outlined below are especially appropriate for use in the elementary grades. They will have to be modified for application in the high school to reflect the subject emphasis of the high school program and the fact that high school students must begin to take greater reponsibility for their own learning. No student should be retained in Nursery or Kindergarten.

Most of the recent research on instructionally effective schools indicates that successful schools have clear goals and teachers who are skillful as well as determined that their students will succeed. There is an expectation that average and above average students will master the curriculum for their grades. Thus, it is important that all schools in Norway House develop: clear academic goals and the expectation that almost all students will achieve them; and approaches to teaching (such as mastery instruction) which are aimed at success and at eliminating failure in the first place.

In the interest of ensuring that promotion and retention decisions are educationally appropriate for individual students, the opinions of specialists and multiple measures of current achievement should be sought, as well as information about the

student's readiness and prospects for successfully meeting the learning requirements of the next grade level.

Because acheivement is closely related to the attitude and effort of students, as well as to the expectations and supports that they receive from parents, there is a need for consultation with students and their parents including a candid discussion of the short and long term consequences of social promotion and failure, and the teacher and parent support as well as student effort required for academic sucsess.

Students who are candidates for failure should be identified in sufficient time to allow adjustments to be made to teaching, student effort, attitudes and performance, and parental support. To this end:

- students who may be candidates for failure should be identified no later than three months before the end of the school year

- conferences should be held with parents to discuss the school's learning goals for all children, the student's current achievement, the school's assessment of the student's learning problems, what the school has done in an attempt to increase the student's achievement to expected levels, possible alternatives and possible solutions

- the teacher, in consultation with specialist personnel and with parental support as appropriate, should identify a program and instructional strategies to enable the student to master the skills necessary for promotion

- special supports such as after-hours instruction or home tutoring should be considered

- student achievement in the outlined areas should be reviewed by teachers and specialists and communicated to parents and the student regularly before the final reporting period.

Even with efforts such as these, some students will remain candidates for retention, although it is to be expected that they will be fewer in number than would have been the case without these efforts. It is critical that many persons participate in determining whether the retention or social promotion option is best suited to a student's needs:

- promotion conferences involving current and upcoming teachers, specialist personnel, the student and parents should review retention and social promotion options, with emphasis on the student's current level of performance and well as the student's prospects for success at the next level.

Because of the social labels attached to grade failure, or the possibility that students may lower their self-expectations as a result of grade retention, efforts should be made to enable students who have been retained to catch up to and rejoin their age peers. Steps include:

- opportunities for students to improve their skills through summer school prior to retention

- programs of remedial and "catch-up" education during the retained year

- opportunities for promotion after partial retention, depending upon the student's learning difficulties and degree of academic progress.

Finally, we know from experience that there will be a small number of students who will not succeed academically, even with their best efforts and those of their teachers. In some cases these few students are subjected to multiple grade retentions, a practice which should be replaced by program selections and special education services may be alternatives to grade retention and social promotion, especially for students who will be placed more than two grade levels below others of their age.

Implications

Policies such as those outlined above would represent a major departure from current practices. They will also be difficult to implement, because when standards have fallen it is very hard to restore them. It is difficult to remind people (teachers, students and parents) that the only success which is worthwhile is that which they worked for.

As is often the case with major policy changes, much of the burden for their implementation will fall on teachers and administrators at the school level. The professional development of teachers will be required and, in this case, will have to include the development of the skills that teachers will require to work effectively with students and parents in an area which has heretofore been largely a professional domain. Also needed will be steps to ensure that the policy does not break down at the beginning, with the avoidance of the early identification of students who may be candidates for grade retention. Special funding arrangements with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada would help to meet the costs of special programs such as summer schools and home tutoring for students in academic difficulty.

Yet ultimately the success of any policy on retention will depend not just on teachers, but on the commitment of administrators, students and parents as well to increase the academic achievement of all students. The retention policy above is only one part of a comprehensive program aimed at making schools more effective. Also needed will be high expectations for all students, a productive learning environment, educationally meaningful parental involvement and support, a school climate which fosters educational achievement, and effective instruction.

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